

MEMORANDUM

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION
23649

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November 19, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

SUBJECT: Pakistan Relief Effort

U.S. Response

The initial requests for emergency assistance from the provincial government of East Pakistan have been met, and contingency plans are now being made to meet what would seem to be the longer range needs. The following is a status report on what we have done in meeting the first requests:

--The first air shipment of AID-financed blankets (10,000) and tents (1,000) is due to arrive in Dacca today. A second air shipment is being planned which will include contributions from voluntary agencies and especially in such items as clothing where they are best prepared to help. This was in response to an urgent request for 10-30,000 blankets, an unspecified number of tents and as much warm clothing as possible (Other contributing governments have accounted for the difference.)

--In response to an urgent need for helicopters to ferry relief into the disaster area, four U.S. military Huey helicopters have been dispatched by the U.S. Strike Command from Pope Air Force Base: They should be operational over the disaster area tomorrow. In addition, two reconnaissance helicopters, under AID contract in Nepal, are being prepared for relief operations and also reach Dacca by tomorrow.

[We received Pakistani clearance to use military helicopters and crews Tuesday morning, and the aircraft took off at 1:00 a.m. Wednesday (flight time 27 hours, assembly time 19 hours).]

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-- The East Pakistanis also requested 50,000 tons of wheat and some \$21million in rupees for the local purchase of building materials and the repairing of coastal embankments.

The 50,000 tons of wheat have already been approved under the PL-480 program but it will take about a month to ship it. This does not raise a problem, however, since from all indications there are sufficient food stocks in East Pakistan for now, in part because of earlier PL-480 shipments. This additional wheat should arrive in time to replenish those stocks before they are drawn down too far. The major problem in the food relief effort is not an overall shortage but distributing what is already there in the disaster area. This is the job of our helicopters.

On the local currency requirements, Ambassador Farland has provided \$52,000 from his emergency fund for immediate needs and there is some \$35 million in Pakistani rupees available for reconstruction. We still do not have a specific assessment of reconstruction requirements. AID estimates that perhaps \$10 million could be spent over the next year because of the undeveloped state of the economy. Whatever we provide on this front would be in addition to the \$10 million that you have already authorized.

Voluntary Agencies, Private Organizations, and Other Governments

The Working Group is in close touch with all of the major voluntary agencies in an effort to coordinate and maximize our public and private response. This includes CARE, Catholic Relief and other organizations with valuable experience in operating in East Pakistan. An organization called Pakistan Relief Fund, Inc. has been formed by a group including Robert Murphy, and other prominent Americans. They hope eventually to have about 50 prominent citizens as members and will raise funds to be channeled through U.S. voluntary agencies that are assisting in the relief effort.

Several other governments including India, Iran, Morocco, Great Britain, France and West Germany are contributing to the emergency relief effort. These sources, for instance, are complementing our shipments of blankets and medical supplies to meet initial requirements. We are keeping in touch with this effort so that duplication can be avoided.

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Problems Ahead

The central problem at the moment, as noted above, is one of distribution rather than of supply. In view of a possible request for additional helicopters, contingency preparations are being made for further airlift. These would probably either have to be diverted from Southeast Asia or sent directly from the U.S., which is expensive and takes at least three days before they are operational in the area.

The central government in Islamabad has still not produced a formal list of requirements. It is unclear what is holding up this necessary evaluation, although bureaucratic confusion and the fact that President Yahya has been in Dacca may be part of the problem. AID is attempting to make an independent judgment, but we can not go much further in the relief effort until we have a thorough evaluation from the scene. Ambassador Farland has now flown to Dacca, and Maurice Williams, the Deputy Administrator of AID and the head of our inter-departmental Working Group, is prepared to go to the scene if coordination remains a problem and we do not soon get the necessary response from the central government.

If additional food proves necessary when the assessment of need is complete, the current worldwide ceiling on PL-480 expenditures would probably have to be raised. This would require White House decision, but it is too early to know now.

Public Handling

The Working Group today has primed the State and AID press officers to background the press on the situation in East Pakistan and on what the U.S. has done.

Criticism of the Pakistani government's handling is increasing in the East Pakistan press. As you know, there is normally deep antagonism in East Pakistan for the central government in the West, and this has been exacerbated by the current election campaign as well as by the present tragedy.

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